The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

A Case of Overreaching?

WHETHER the learned Owen J. Lattimore of Johns Hopkins is familiar with the sports world saying that "a good offense is the best defense," he seems thoroughly familiar with its political equivalent. There is no other way of explaining his brash remarks about withdrawing recognition of the Chinese Nationalist forces on Formosa—uttered before the American Academy of Political Science, at the very moment he and his disastrous Asia policy are under intense scrutiny.

Perhaps Mr. Lattimore is emboldened by the blasts at Senator Joseph McCarthy in the nation's press. Possibly he is encouraged that John Foster Dulles' just-published book—an advance copy of which he may well have seen—foresees the day when the United States will be forced to recognize the Chinese Communists. Is Mr. Lattimore also superbly confident that his support from highly respected scholars and administrators and various professional societies will substantiate him? In any case he has thrown down the gauntlet and nervily reiterated the ruinous Asia policy line which his writings have advocated all along.

To crown it all he comes right out and advises the United States to withdraw completely from the Chinese situation on the fatuous grounds that we should let the Russians be known as the supporters of one Chinese political party (which incidentally will be the only party around) while the Americans in their noble disinterestedness will be known and loved as friends of the Chinese only as individuals. That somewhat similar sentiments have actually emanated from the State Department makes Mr. Lattimore's current proposal even more audacious.

Curiously enough, all this coincides with reports from Hainan and Formosa that indicate that Nationalist resistance is stiffening. Some observers who are on the scene go so far as to say that Formosa cannot be taken without Russian intervention on a major scale. Conditions on Formosa are decidedly better—civilian and military morale, economic life and the attitude of the Formosans themselves. Governor Wu says that, with $10,000,000 in American aid each month, even extraordinary military and defense construction expenses could be covered.

What is to be gained from abandoning this center of resistance against the march of Russian Communism in Asia? To hand things over to the USSR so that centuries hence some inhabitants of the Asiatic mainland will hear about America's love for the Chinese people as individuals, and how that inspired us to leave them to the whims of a new Genghis Khan, is simply to compound our errors of the recent past.

Finally it is reported from Lake Success that according to dominant opinion the USSR does not want the Chinese Communists admitted to the UN; the Kremlin fears to expose them to Western influences! (Therefore it would be a clever US move to bring about the supplanting of the Nationalists' representation there.) There is some fire behind the McCarthy smokescreen. The acceptance of ideas as fantastic as this goes far toward explaining Mr. Lattimore's success as a political strategist.

No Blood, No Heroes

THERE was that famous photo of Cardinal Mindszenty sitting between the two guards in the courtroom. That was the first general hint. One day the papers were writing about an angry man, proud and defiant, and the words they quoted rang with episcopal authority. Then, overnight, there was that other man between the uniformed guards, a man with strange, unfamiliar eyes and in his expression the shadow of fear—only it wasn't really fear, it was something else again, akin to fear but still quite different: a new

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• NEXT WEEK •

Emmanuel Mounier died in Paris last month at the age of 45. Mounier was the leader of the personalist movement in France. HELENE ISWOLSKY, who was associated with the movement in its early days, writes in tribute to the philosopher and editor of *Esprit*.

"The Christian message, wrote Mounier, did not start as a philosophy addressed to the learned, but it was an appeal to every man: change the heart of your heart. It was Mounier's great merit to have reminded young men and women that this basic rule was essential, if they wanted to play the game fairly."

unlabeled emotion, something that might have been mixed in a test tube and then spilt over a soul. When the Cardinal began his incriminating, humiliating testimony, it was that second man, the chemical creature, who spoke.

The world was shocked. There was a hint here of the ultimate murder: the killing not of the man but of the hero, the saint, the coward, the villain or whatever the man might have been. It was as if they were boasting, "Look what we can do. And we could do the same thing to Paul in his prison or to Joan standing before Cauchon." François Mauriac said it was as if someone among them discovered the secret of the insects which sustain themselves on living victims, paralyzing their powers but leaving them the appearance of life.

If one studied the Mindszenty case, the statements and photos that were released, the warning was there. But the whole idea of "nerve gases" still seems wildly fantastic, even afte it has appeared on the front pages of metropolitan papers, backed by a statement from Major General Anthony C. McAuliffe, chief of the Army Chemical Corps.

The name of McAuliffe, hero of Bastogne, recalls his defiant "Nuts!" the briefest, most impressive rejection of capitulation in military annals. And one is led to the gloomy conclusion that there may be no place for heroes like the General in future wars. McAuliffe hinted broadly of the new chemical weapon being developed in this country, and very probably in Russia too—a gas that could destroy the will to resist and thereby "obtain victory without enormous destruction to the enemy economy." This new gas could kill the human urge to shout "Nuts!" and go on with the fight.

Of course there is something to be said for warfare of this kind. It might be clean and unbloody. A belligerent enemy could be turned into an army of docile Mindszentys, and no wounds, no slaughter, no brutal butchery. As General McAuliffe put it, in the coldly clinical language of the military, wars might be won "at the smallest logistical cost." But there is scant comfort in this. Modern wars have often been described as inhuman and irrational. Yet it is no great step ahead if they are turned into an attack not on individual men but on what is specifically human. There is no satisfaction in seeing the overwhelming violence of war transformed into a coldly calculated attack on reason itself. It is one thing to kill men by the million. It is still another thing—and perhaps an even more frightening

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thing—to kill that which makes man human. Now that the pages of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell are being translated into stories for the New York *Times*, there may be more reason than ever for universal terror. Perhaps the real abomination of desolation will not strike like a lightning bolt but come silently, creeping across the earth slowly, like an odorless gas.

Union's Meaning

A UNITED Europe, said Premier Bidault in his Lyons speech on the Atlantic Pact, "is in the process of gestation." Underlying his speech was the fear that European unity might die a-bornin'. The threat is the grave stalemate which has been caused by France's fear of German power, and Britain's disinclination to enter the union fully enough to counterbalance Germany. France's fear is inevitable, and Britain's unwillingness to enter a union which could well destroy her fragile trade balance is quite as inevitable if it is assumed—as the English have no choice but to assume—that US aid will end in 1952.

The United States bears responsibility in this impasse because the United States is the only nation with power to act decisively towards breaking the impasse. For one thing, we can realize now that our aid will be needed to meet a dollar deficit in post-1952 trade.

The alternate course is the one which M. Bidault is pointing out to us.

He says that there should be an Atlantic High Council, representing the twelve Atlantic Pact nations, which would have the power to coordinate the economies of the Atlantic nations, and direct their defense. Following the "essentials" of defense and economic coordination, there would perhaps be a political integration.

What is radical about the Bidault proposal is that the Premier is shifting gears—from European integration to Atlantic coordination. So far the United States has stood on the outside, urging, aiding—an expensive, but in terms of modern politics, relatively painless activity. M. Bidault is suggesting that the United States now come inside. He suggests that we not only talk about integration, but be integrated. He is suggesting that this country "put in order and orient" the trade and defense of the Atlantic community.

The rewards that could be expected include new British willingness to go all the way in integration, and new French certainty that the Germans could not dominate the union. The now stalling movement towards union of the democracies would be enormously encouraged.

Opposed are the genuinely formidable problems such a proposal brings: the United States would be committed irrevocably to European economic and military security—and the latent American inclination towards isolationism would awake with a roar at that. The United States would have to compromise the independence and self-sufficiency of its economy, even, as General Bradley has suggested, of its military establishment, to meet Europe's needs.

M. Bidault has made a grand proposal, and few yet understand its implications. It is perhaps best understood when the term "community of men" is substituted for "Atlantic community." In both cases the American people must face with realism what it would mean.

An Old Pattern

THE passage and presidential veto of the Kerr-Thomas Amendment to the Natural Gas Act of 1938 presents a familiar political spectacle. The drive to remove the Federal Power Commission's authority to control the rates charged by natural gas producers in interstate sales was initiated by Senators and Representatives of the oil- and gas-producing states. It was vigorously opposed by Congressmen whose constituents are primarily consumers—and by Senator Douglas of Illinois and others with a national rather than a sectional outlook. But it passed both Houses by a close vote which cut across party lines.

In the interval which Mr. Truman took to make up his mind, newspapers throughout the land clamored for a veto. Sponsors of the bill included some of the President's strongest personal and political friends and biggest contributors to his campaign fund. On the other hand he had to think of his Fair Deal and the public interest. For the natural gas business has a monopoly character, and it will not be long before a dozen out of the several thousand natural gas producers from the rich Southwestern fields control one half of the area's output. With controls removed "the large windfall profits" of which the President spoke would be inevitable.

But how do politics stand now that the President has done the right thing in the defense of the public interest? The interested Senators and

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Representatives have nothing to worry about. They stand more solidly than ever with the folks back home, for they got the Kerr-Thomas Bill out on the floor way ahead of a long list of nationally and internationally vital pieces of legislation—and all but put it over.

Then there is another group of Senators and Representatives who are feeling rather good. A lot of Southwestern Congressmen are now in their debt. They can count on outside help when legislation affecting their own home commodities reaches the carpet.

As for the President, he has made the most of the chance to reassert his interest in the well-being of the whole people. He now has only one lesser matter to decide. When the term of Nelson Lee Smith of the Federal Power Commission expires June 22, should he be reappointed? Mr. Smith supported the Kerr bill and was not slated for another term. But under present circumstances the President might reconsider; Mr. Smith's renomination might prove a useful sop to certain now-aggrieved Southwesterners. But only this small cloud of unresolved domestic decision mars an otherwise genial blue Washington sky.

Black and White

THREE cases now pending give the Supreme Court an opportunity to destroy the legal basis for racial segregation.

Fifty-four years ago the Court ruled that railroads could segregate their passengers if "equal" accomodations were provided. With this legal justification it has been an old Southern custom to provide separate accomodations for Negroes and whites, but the "equal" provision of the law has not been so conscientiously observed. In a famous dissension on the 1896 decision, Associate Justice John Harlan of Kentucky wrote: "The thin disguise of 'equal' accomodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead anyone, nor atone for the wrong this day done." Harlan's dissent stated the substance of the argument that is now being made by the Justice Department to have the Supreme Court reverse its 1896 ruling.

The issue has been brought to the court by Elmer W. Henderson, who while traveling in 1942 on business for the President's wartime Fair Employment Practices Commission, was refused a seat in the diner because the tables ordinarily reserved for Negroes were taken by white passengers.

The other two cases involve state colleges. Texan Herman M. Sweatt refuses to attend a segregated state law school. He says that while he has been making this test case, students at the University of Texas Law School have been "interested and cooperative. I have been invited to their dormitories and several cooperatives on the campus have offered me a permanent place to live if I should gain admittance. . . . Some of the students have been to my home in Houston." The University of Texas is the only place in the country to have an all-white branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In Oklahoma, Professor G. W. McLaurin was not allowed to attend classes with white students at the state university graduate school. He sat in an anteroom during lectures and was restricted to separate tables in the library and cafeteria. He charges that this was unconstitutional.

At the same time that these three crucial cases reached the Supreme Court, a conference at Atlanta University of educators and students from three hundred border-state and southern colleges and universities unanimously called for the removal of all segregation laws in schools. The delegates said that the climate of opinion among students and teachers at Southern white colleges was against continuing segregation.

During the conference, enterprising photographers from Georgia's Talmadge newspaper made pictures of Negro and white delegates eating and working together, etc. Herman Talmadge is thoughtfully storing munitions for the coming campaign. But the unanimity and conviction of these delegates at Atlanta, the sense of racial injustice which demonstrates itself at Atlanta and at the University of Texas—which is evident to an as yet limited, self-conscious extent, yet a potent extent, throughout the South—must give even the provident Governor some bad moments.

N.B.

ROBERT P. MARTIN reports from Tokyo in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* that "at least 1,000,000 tons of imported food, including rice, wheat and flour, is stockpiled in Japan. With Japan now producing 85 percent of its food requirements, this reserve supply is not needed at the moment. American officials, as well as some Allied diplomats, have suggested that the United States offer the Chinese Communists 1,000,000 tons of food on a 'humanitarian basis' with no strings attached. . . ."

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The Church and the Churches

A movement for Christian unity gets encouragement from Rome.

Thomas Boyle

IN 1925 when the corporate union of Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Methodists into the United Church of Canada was in the making, a Presbyterian was asked why they had not invited the Anglicans to join.

"Oh, but we did. And they gave us the same answer that Rome had already given them."

"Which was?"

"That the lion was quite willing to lie down with the lamb, provided the lamb were inside the lion."

We may accept as exact, if rather inelegant, this description of the attitude of the Catholic Church toward reunion with the dissident Christian bodies. The first approach to the Holy See by the leaders of the ecumenical movement of which I can find record took place in 1919 when a delegation called on Pope Benedict XV. Their report stated that:

> The Holy Father received them courteously, listened to their story and expressed sympathy with their purpose, but intimated tactfully, but no less decisively, that there was one way and only one in which the object they had at heart could be realized, namely, that they and those for whom they spoke should submit themselves to the one whom their Lord had appointed to be their rightful head, the one to whom they were then speaking.

In 1927 a decree of the Holy Office forbade Catholics to attend the Lausanne Conference, an ecumenical assembly. After the conference an encyclical (*Mortalium Animos*) was issued giving the reasons for the abstention of Catholics. Chiefly it was because of the underlying assumption of the organizers that among the existing churches there is none that is simply the true Church and that all Christian bodies are, although imperfectly, the Church of Christ. Nor were Catholics permitted to take part in the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948. Finally, the very first sentence of the recent "Instruction to Local Ordinaries about the Ecumenical Movement" reads, "The Catholic Church takes no actual part in ecumenical conventions and other assemblies of a similar character."

Nevertheless the Instruction announces a definite change in policy regarding the ecumenical movement as such. While it rules out any possibility of compromise in doctrine and again condemns religious indifference, the bishops are told to give the movement vigilant attention and also to foster and guide it, in order to assist its members in their search for truth and to shield the faithful from the perils that might arise from it.

Before seeking the reasons for this change in policy it may be useful to give some background material about the ecumenical movement.

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THE movement for unity among the churches is as old as their differences, but for the most part it has been unofficial, intermittent and restricted in the number of congregations and localities affected. The ecumenical movement is, as the word implies, intended to be worldwide; it is official, in that churches as such are its members and it functions through continuing committees that carry on the work between the general assemblies.

The ecumenists, as they are called, did not begin with the expectation of reaching complete, corporate, organic unity all at once. They have endeavored to find what degree of unity they might achieve in every field of religious activity, in evangelism, worship, social service, education, dogma and morals. They intend to unite on these common grounds in spite of differences in matters of vital belief, in the hope that the grounds of unity will gradually widen. At present 155 Christian bodies from 44 countries are members of the movement. They are of the Eastern Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican and Protestant persuasions.

Some official statements will give an insight into the nature of the movement. It has for its object "that churches may be bound closer to Christ and therefore closer to one another." It expresses the conviction that "It is not in man's power . . . to create the unity of the Holy Catholic Church. . . . But it is within the power of God."

All its members believe "that the Church is

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God's gift to men for the salvation of the world. . . . That the Church persists in continuity throughout history. . . . That the Church has a vocation to worship God in His holiness, to proclaim the Gospel to every creature." Unfortunately this Church is now divided into churches to which, however, "God gives the gift of His grace . . . even in their separation." And although theological synthesis is as yet impossible, "there is an earnest desire for clearly formulated truth."

These quotations are from the report of the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches which was set up in 1948 at Amsterdam. This was the latest in a series of conferences which began at Edinburgh in 1910, followed by "ecumenical assemblies" at Panama, 1916, Stockholm, 1925, Lausanne, 1927 and Oxford, 1937. The World Council does not attempt to legislate for the churches nor to control them. It is not in itself a separate church body. To judge from some statements from Protestant quarters before and after the publication of the present Instruction one would be inclined to believe that only the Catholic Church has remained aloof from the movement and refused to join the World Council. This is not exact. One of the largest Protestant bodies in the U.S., the Southern Baptists, declined to join, and not all the Eastern Orthodox Churches are members.

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WE COME back to our question: Why has Rome refused to become a member of the World Council of Churches, and why has she now decided to lend qualified approval to the ecumenical movement? Those who can see no good in the Church will reply (and have done so) to the first part of the question, that she is exclusive, imperialistic, totalitarian and non-cooperative; to the second, that the new policy is an attempt at power politics in her struggle against Communism.

The reason for the Holy See's abstention from the ecumenical movements, in the sense of her becoming an equal with equals in the search for unity, may be illustrated by analogy from the World Council's attitude towards the Jews. Their official statement on this matter is based on the fact that although both believe in the same God there can be unity between Jews and the members of the ecumenical movement only on the condition that the Jews accept Christ as God's incarnate Son. Similarly the Catholic Church demands acceptance of her divine mission by the dissident Christians. In the meantime the World Council undertakes to provide specially trained ministers to carry on missionary work among the Jews, to cooperate with them in civic and social affairs and to combat anti-Semitism.

As to the Church's new attitude towards the ecumenical movement, one is tempted to express surprise at the quickness with which it has come about. The movement is but forty years old and has undergone considerable modification since its inception. Rome is too experienced to join every parade and to follow the fire-engine every time it leaves the station. It is a great tribute to the movement that the Church, which in her guardianship of the Deposit of Faith must be ever cautious, should recognize it, after trial, as taking form "under the inspiring grace of God," as the Instruction puts it, and evidencing "a desire [which] has awakened and is growing daily in the hearts of many who are separated from the Catholic Church, that a reunion be accomplished among all who believe in Christ the Lord."

The Instruction also notes the change in "mental attitude" in the members of the movement. It has been pointed out by students of the movement that there is a distinct difference between the aims and outlook at Stockholm in 1925 and those of Amsterdam in 1948. The change is in object and method. In the early stages the ecumenists were captivated by the bigness, efficiency and power that a joining of forces promised. More significantly, the movement may be said to have changed over from the natural to the supernatural field of action. The men of the twenties were influenced by a spirit of optimistic belief in the natural perfectibility of human society; liberalism and its belief in inevitable progress still held sway over the prosperous nations. Hence there was a tendency to believe that men could themselves accomplish what they now recognize is possible only under "the pressure of the Spirit of God."

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THE Church, therefore, now wants to help the ecumenical movement attain its goal. For this reason she recommends it to the fervent prayers of the whole Catholic people. Further, she permits competent theologians to participate in discussion groups which may offer "a desirable occasion for spreading a knowledge of Catholic doctrine with which non-Catholics are generally not sufficiently conversant." There is more to this sentence than one might at first be aware of. The greatest task of the movement will be in the realm of doctrine, of theology. No other collaboration will be long-lived or truly effective without it. And here the Catholic theologian has effective aid to offer.

Without ascribing to non-Catholics ignorance of theology, it is fair to note that Catholic tradition in theology has always emphasized an exactitude and continuity in dogmatic definition that have been lacking in religious bodies where

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there is no central authority or where the principles of free interpretation and the sole priesthood of the individual are basic. Thus when writers today use the terms redemption, grace, original sin, sacrament, church; Catholics and non-Catholics, and the latter among themselves, do not give them the same meaning.

Correctness in theological expression is of the utmost practical importance—even Carlyle retracted his wisecrack about tweedledum and tweedledee. Two examples from the literature of the movement will illustrate the point. One reads: "The starting point of the ecumenical movement is the acceptance of the fellow Christian of another church, *in his church*, as a fellow member of Christ." This is clearly refuted in the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* without denying that dissident Christians may be just and holy, children of God, temples of the Holy Ghost and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Again, the Constitution of the World Council of Churches says it "is a fellowship of churches which accept Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior." This is theologically defective because the real humanity of Jesus Christ is not affirmed; the proposition could be subscribed to by the ancient heretics who claimed that Our Lord was truly God, but only apparently a man. The presence in discussions of Catholic theologians will ensure the final disappearance of the pragmatic tendency which was manifest in the early stages of the movement, when it was held that contrary ideas are compatible when we rise above dogmatic differences to unite in a common effort for the common good.

While it is true that unity for practical activity without unity in doctrinal matters cannot be effective in an essential mission of the Church, the spreading of the Kingdom of God on earth, nevertheless a mutual alignment of forces against materialism, whether of the communistic or the secularist variety, can be very useful in the promotion of a secondary aim of the Church, the building of the Good Society. The doctrinal basis here is natural theology. Concerted action for the defense of the principles of the natural law are given special encouragement in the Instruction.

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ONE of the blessings that we may hope shall accrue to Catholics from a growing effort to collaborate will be the change of emphasis in their theological preoccupation from defense to exposition. Our theological thinking has been badly cramped since the rise of Protestantism. Instead of bringing to light the hidden and undeveloped treasures of Christ's gospel we have been forced by controversy to a rather partial, one-sided development of the doctrines of our Faith. For example most instructed Catholics can rattle off the arguments they learned in their course on apologetics and at the same time remain regrettably unfamiliar with the inner mystical realities of the Body of Christ, at least in so far as expressing them is concerned.

A change in the consciousness of Catholic activity may reasonably be looked for as a result of the Instruction. It is a reminder that we are called to be Catholics not only to defend the Church but to spread it; that every parish is a missionary band to the community in which it works; that our vocation is not only to save our own souls but to save the world; that Christ alone merited our redemptive graces, and the Church is, ordinarily, the sole means of distributing them. It is worthy of note that the ecumenical movement began among non-Catholics precisely in their field of missionary work; thus its inspiration is eminently Christian.

It is natural that his contemporaries should see Pope Pius XII as an outstanding leader and diplomat in a time of actual and impending war. History may regard him rather as a great theologian who, in his letters on the Mystical Body and the Divine Liturgy, has revolutionized the science of ecclesiology, and turned men's minds to Christ's design for His Church. It is to be hoped that the present Instruction will save the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* from the fate that overtook *Rerum Novarum*, a long period of lack of appreciation and recognition.

Do DP's Want the Moon?

Claire Huchet Bishop

WHEN we do not digest our food it is not necessarily because the food is bad in itself, but because our system is incapable of absorbing it. We have forgotten the meaning of the word 'assimilate.' Whenever a nation cannot or will not assimilate a foreign element, the difficulty lies not in the foreign element, but in the national society itself."

So speaks Abbé Glasberg, French Director of the Center for the Social Organization of Foreigners. During the German occupation, Abbé Glasberg was most active in rescuing the Jews. No one knows better than he the tragic plight of those who are at any time denied the right of citizenship. He knows the horrors of the concentration camp. Once condemned to death himself, Abbé Glasberg, after the liberation, went right

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on snatching people out of camps and restoring their human dignity. He played an important part in aiding emigration to Palestine.

Now, five years after the end of the War, rehabilitation of the people fleeing the new regimes in Central Europe occupies his time. Many of them reached the American zone in Germany, and from there they have trickled into France.

People whisper that the 600,000 DP's now in France are "unassimilable." They want the moon. They complain all the time, they are never satisfied; perpetually disappointed, they consider themselves cheated. We give them all the material assistance we can afford. If they are worth anything they will hoist themselves out of it somehow."

So the French people—are they the only ones? —try to buy their peace of mind with money. But there is no peace, because men cannot be handled like so many bags of flour. The DP's are uprooted, and not only have they to be rooted again, but they have to be tended.

And they have to be tended in the proper way. Just now in France the DP's are too often the easy prey of their own national committees which use them for political aims, adding to their unrest. It is the right kind of French group which has to incorporate them.

Abbé Glasberg has hit upon the idea that the best kind of group is a group of manual workers. But not any kind of manual workers. Workers who have already set out to work their own way in our present world.

There are such groups now in occidental Europe, in France principally. They are organized in what might be called an advanced and educational form of cooperatives. Legally they are called: Workers Cooperatives of Production in Communitarian Form.

Such is the community of Boimondau, built around a watch casing factory, started in 1940, one of seven large French watch casing concerns.

Watch casing in France is an industry in need of highly specialized workers. It is a kind of work which, though strictly on an industrial production basis, requires artisan laborers who have had a thorough apprenticeship. For that reason, many young Frenchmen, just out of professional schools, prefer to enter the commercial side of the business instead of the production line.

Manual work is a powerful factor in the stabilization of the human being that many refugees shrink from, it is true, because their mental state inclines them to consider it beneath them. It seems to them a retrogression. But watch making is different. Its fineness confers on it a sort of dignity.

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SO MUCH for the economic side of the question. To teach watch casing to refugees so that they will be able to earn their own living is not enough. In order to regain one's own dignity, to get a better sense of values and a saner outlook, one must become part of a workers' group which will bring about assimilation.

Abbé Glasberg took his problem and his thoughts to Boimondau. The companions of Boimondau agreed to act as teachers, sort of foster parents to a group of 115 DP's. Boimondau will provide the professional training through its own technicians, and will also, and this is most important, gradually initiate the DP's to another kind of living where cooperation is paramount. It will be done much less through talk than by being daily exposed to the life of Boimondau. Boimondau is itself more powerful than any speech or book when it comes to understanding a better way of living.

Up the hill, behind Boimondau, there is now for sale a watch-making factory, with ground, buildings and machines. The reasons it is for sale are personal and have nothing to do with business possibilities, which are excellent. If the DP's get this factory, it will not make competition for Boimondau, since the DP's would specialize in watches of precious metal, whereas Boimondau makes chrome watches.

Once they know their trade, the DP's, together with some of Boimondau people, will in turn form themselves into a Workers Cooperative of Production in Communitarian Form.

Such is Abbé Glasberg's new approach to the problem of the DP's. A carefully thought out, scientific, far-sighted and human approach. A constructive help which takes into consideration not only the material and physical welfare of the displaced, but the whole of man, thereby putting him in a position to make a worthwhile contribution to the world.

"What is the use?" say the skeptical. "115 people. It is not worth the trouble. Now if it were 10,000, even 1,000. . . ." But it is 115 to start with and other Communities of Work may be formed later. It is by laying a solid foundation for the integration and re-habilitation of small groups that a solution will eventually be accomplished. Once more someone is raising the DP's hope, and it is not illusion, not condescending charity, not embittering, anonymous help. It is a hope cut to the measure of man.

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FROM ENGLAND

On Being Innocent Abroad

Food in Britain is bad, the drinks are atrocious, the kicking around you get from the hotels is an insult, the queuing up is a bore, and the red tape involved in buying British goods as gifts for the folks back home just isn't worth it.

THAT testimonial was reprinted in the British press from the New York *Daily Mirror*. My knowledge of the American press does not extend so far as the *Daily Mirror* of New York (though I do know the *Brewery Gulch Gazette,* of Bisbee, Arizona—and a good little paper it is) ; but I strongly suspect that the *Mirror* is a tabloid, and accordingly more concerned with being read than with being believed. And if that be so, readers of THE COMMONWEAL are not likely to take their reports on Great Britain from the *Daily Mirror*. But those statements might just as well have been printed in the Chicago *Tribune* (perhaps they have been) or even in papers that do not have such a pronounced discomfort about my country; and it does seem to me a great pity that such prejudices should be implanted in people's minds at a time when an unusually large number of Americans are contemplating a visit to Great Britain.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not worrying about dollars. That is Sir Stafford Cripps' affair. I pay my taxes and my bills as best I can, finding it more difficult every year, and that's about all I know of economics. What I am concerned about is that American visitors should have a good time here and not be disappointed. And this, not because they are Americans, with dollars, but simply because they are visitors from abroad.

The last of the portentous charges made by the *Daily Mirror,* red tape involved in buying British goods free of sales tax, is of course one I wouldn't know about. If it be true, then American visitors are not likely to remain quiet about it, and it is then not likely to go unremedied. But what pleases me is that even the disgruntled report in the *Daily Mirror* recognized that there were things in English shops worth taking to the folks back home—even though he did not find them sufficiently good to make the red tape worthwhile. As for queues, I again don't know, for lack of wide enough experience. I do know that I've not seen a queue outside a shop for at least two years. But then I have not traveled about, and I've not been in London at all. There may be some queues in parts of London (certainly for restaurants and movies); but London is no more England than New York is America. And our bus-queuing is pretty generally chronic, though at least we queue—we don't struggle.

The bad food, the atrocious drinks. There I guess is really the rub. And it's not simply a matter of "good" and "bad." There is the whole background of what one is used to. If an American in England eats a succession of tolerable meals but without a sign of his cherished salads, he's apt to start talking about bad food. When I am confronted with those strips of tasteless bacon, exactly the same dull stuff from Baltimore to Seattle, I'm tempted to call American food awful—indeed, I've done it.

★

IT'S all part of a bigger thing. Americans and English try to carry their country about with them, and use its manners and customs and institutions as a yardstick. It's natural enough; all people tend to do it. But not to do it is a first rule for happy traveling. It's plain silly for an Englishman in the United States to insist on drinking tea wherever he goes; he will only be progressively frustrated. It's plain silly for an American in England to insist on always drinking coffee; he will only be slowly poisoned. There are some people on this side who say we should take more trouble to provide Americans with what they are used to. Were the suggestion prompted by hospitality rather than the need for dollars, I should be more impressed. In any case I don't think it is a good idea. It's a further step in world standardization. Some of the results would be ludicrous. On my very first day on American soil, twelve years ago, my host, actuated by the purest hospitality, said he would bring me a "real English drink": scotch and soda—with about eight ounces of solid ice in it.

On the other hand again, I have seen pleas against providing Americans with what they are used to, on the ground that the American wants to see what is typically English. One example I read was of Americans who had heard of the small and intimate (their word, I feel sure!) compartments of English railway carriages; and they were disappointed at Southampton to be put into a coach open throughout its length (and incidentally, one less comfortable than yours and with our barbarous arrangement of no distinction between men's and women's conveniences). Well, of course everybody can't be pleased all the time, but my sympathy is with those Americans; especially as they had the discrimination to dislike the loud-speakers giving directions about trains, destination, and changing.

But to get back to food. Of course there is plenty of bad food here, by any standard. And in my opinion the average English hotel is a discouraging place, whose proprietor or manager too often displays a rugged individualism that commends itself neither to Americans nor Englishmen. I will even add a count to the *Daily Mirror* indictment. Some of our hotel-keepers regard tourists in general and Americans in particular as sheep to be shorn (atavism maybe: medieval English commerce was built up on wool). Last fall I sat in an American home and listened to my host while he recounted, gently and courteously and without rancor, how he had been

This article is the first in a new series of dispatches from abroad. Its author, Donald Attwater, will report regularly from Great Britain.

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overcharged, badly overcharged, at a hotel in one of England's best-known tourist resorts. I am sure he spoke without exaggeration, and it was shaming for me.

★

BUT after all, bad food, overcharging and the rest are found in varying degrees at all levels, in all countries. The problem is how to avoid them. There are all sorts of partial helps; but what is a three-star hotel to the Automobile Association may be just a howling bore to you and me. I do not know to what extent it is insurance to put oneself entirely in the hands of a travel agency. Certainly even the best agency cannot be infallible all the time. In any case, very many travelers prefer, and surely rightly prefer, to travel on their own. For them the best thing is to have a friend in England, one who can put them wise, not only to the best accommodations but to other things as well—who will insist on their going to Cambridge as well as Oxford, on their not missing St. Augustine's Abbey ruins at Canterbury or the chapel where Bishop Carroll was consecrated at Lulworth, who will tell them about the cats at Saint Ives, the mermaid's family at Llyn y Fan Fach, and the pub with a balcony over the Thames near Wapping Old Stairs.

Psychologically there is only one satisfactory mood for travel, and that is a determination to accept the countries one visits on their own terms, to share their life in their own way as far as one is able. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" is an old piece of proverbial wisdom. Am I wrong in thinking that Americans, more than most people, tend to find this difficult? During 1943-44, to take a small but perhaps significant example, it was noticed over here how unwilling GI's were to adopt our turns of speech useful in daily life: e.g., to ask for a "return" ticket, and not a "round-trip," the "underground" and not the "subway," a "sweet" and not "dessert," "sweets" and not "candy," "trousers" and not "pants," "pants" and not "drawers," a "tap" and not a "faucet," and not to be too free with the word "bum" and its derivatives. The fact that I was commended in Chicago for calling a tram a street-car, suggests that we English are the same. We certainly have, I believe, the reputation of refusing to learn elementary phrases of foreign tongues abroad, though in my experience this is emphatically not true of British soldiers.

It is surprising that the *Daily Mirror* did not have an unkind word to spare for our weather. Perhaps it was assumed that every American would know that England is preeminently the land of fog. I can't remember the last time I saw a fog, unless it was in Pittsburgh. I freely admit that English weather at its worst is frightful. At its best it is near perfect—but there's not nearly enough of it. However, for the comfort of the midwestern visitor, our summer never provides anything so intolerable as northern Indiana last July. Nor is this simply an Englishman's gripe: the Americans made even more fuss about it than I did.

DONALD ATTWATER.

Communications

China's Famine

Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE Editors: The approaching famine in China is, I feel, a profound challenge to the Christian ideal. Appalled by the enormity of that tragedy, Christians are yet frustrated because political considerations prevent relief. COMMONWEAL by voicing our conscience may help to develop the conviction that aid must be sent to China.

One may argue that such charity is or is not politically expedient. No one may argue that it would not be Christ-like. Those of us who are of Irish extraction may recall that the 19th century Englishman more than once found it politically expedient to let our forebears suffer famine. Clearly the lesson learned is that the political prescience of man is not so great that he may allow thousands of his fellows to starve in its name. Certainly we who profess to be followers of Christ may not do so.

THOMAS N. BROWN.

"The Wall"

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE Editors: I would like to turn your attention to a few lines in Mr. Cogley's review of John Hersey's book, *The Wall*. I quote: "Mr. Hersey seems to say that the Poles too were largely indifferent to the crime in Warsaw. Perhaps he overstates the case." This is indeed an overstatement. It is moreover, an untruth and a gross injustice. If Mr. Hersey knows that the Germans ordered the Jews to build the wall, he must also know that the Germans were the absolute and cruel lords of the whole town and country and that they had deprived us (the Poles) of all liberty of action and nearly of thought, from the moment they—a hundred times stronger than we—had conquered and crushed our land completely.

Mr. Hersey must also know that the death penalty awaited those who helped or hid a Jew in their house. (Please see part 11 of Sholem Asch's *Tales of Our People*.) In spite of this it was done constantly and when the Jews decided to fight, we gave them arms. I myself carried small parcels and messages to them as long as the Germans allowed me to visit my son, a priest, whose parish was in the Ghetto. He worked for two years exclusively for Catholics of Jewish origin. There were many new conversions and sometimes they had to be baptized in a dreadful rush and hurry in my son's room: especially when they knew that the Germans were preparing new "death transports." Mr. Hersey does not realize that at that time Poles and Jews suffered

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nearly alike. We lost four millions of our people in prisons and concentration camps. . . .

COUNTESS MARGARET PLATER-ZYBERK.

Epic of Fear

Los Angeles, California

TO THE Editor: A short footnote may be in order, in connection with Pierre Emmanuel's stirring appraisal of Georges Bernanos' *Dialogues des Carmelites* in your issue of April 7th.

I have no doubt that this "scenario for a film" is everything that M. Emmanuel says it is. But nowhere is any reference made to the obvious source material, *Song at the Scaffold* by Baroness Gertrud von le Fort.

The story of the scenario, as recounted in the translation of M. Emmanuel's article by Sylvia Glass, is identical with the Von le Fort novel, as published in 1933 by Sheed & Ward.

And it will take no credit away from Bernanos to point out that the whole pattern of this scenario is explicit in the novel. So explicit, in fact, that I was attracted to it myself as a piece for the theatre and I accordingly arranged with Gertrud von le Fort for permission to dramatize the story in play form. . . .

In the course of my correspondence with Gertrud von le Fort, in June 1949, she had this comment to make about the Bernanos version:

"Several years ago a plan arose in France to film my novel and a contract was made though never realized. The poet Bernanos had understaken to write the dialogue but died before finishing it and only left a few fragments about the themata . . . the film has never been produced and the contract, which was for two years, is extinct. Some time ago the widow of M. Bernanos asked for permission to print this film-fragment . . . and I did not object."

Unquestionably, the Bernanos treatment deserves universal appreciation on its own merits. But it should not be forgotten that this particular approach to a study of fear, with all of its great timeliness today, is something that was begun by Von le Fort, not by Bernanos. All dramatic rights in the story, either for theatre or films, remain with Gertrud von le Fort, who is represented in this matter in the United States by Samuel French. . . .

EMMET LAVERY.

The Slight Pause

Toronto, Canada

TO THE Editors: Your editorial piece on TV in the March 24 issue hit me in a soft spot. You don't know how right you are. Recently, while I was preparing a magazine article on Canadian television (which we hope will avoid all those horrible things you suffer from below us), Alphonse Ouimet discussed its impact on youth. He is the Canadian co-ordinator of TV which will be operated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, an independent body, though a government agency.

After studying TV in Europe, England and the US, he believes the English have done it best. And best of all, they do not consider it necessary to force-feed the ultra high airwaves twenty-four hours a day. They curtail their visual programing to a few hours a day; they get quality without quantity. Further, there is no TV programing during the hours when school children should be doing their homework. We parents expect Canada to follow the same sane system. However, I fear the childless will force the CBC to ape the US again.

We are small here, but our radio system could stand some study from our big, slaphappy neighbor (in charity, I must admit millions are not slaphappy but the majority suggest it). Having won four out of the five international radio awards in Cleveland last year, we think we have demonstrated our broadcasting ability. It is actually possible to suffer a whiff of culture on radio here. Besides, the commercial people are strictly in a backseat; they get in, but under careful control. It will be thus with TV. Young as we are we boast of our maturity in some things. Radio, audible and visible, is one of them.

J. E. BELLIVEAU.

The Stage

The Wisteria Trees

THE ill-logic, non-sense, and just plain silliness of the commercial theatre can be proved by reading any small selection of its programs. As a matter of fact the process ought to comprise a study, and I recommend it as a thesis for any desperate and intelligent drama student in the land. From my own hasty observation, I make it a post-Belasco phenomenon that grand lists of helpers, designers, assistants, assistants-to-assistants and just plain wrestlers, precede the actors' names. But for the purposes of this note it is pertinent to consider the subtitles to the play at stake. It is true that during the last five years we have had the "adaptation" stretched, it would seem, to the farthest limit. We have had plays *based on* the novel, the biography, the report, the magazine article, and the "idea of;" we have had plays "suggested by;" and we have had plays from plays and plays from movies and plays from the radio cereal. I don't think however that any of these strange adjustments out of the immediate past can possibly top Joshua Logan's program explanation concerning his present piece starring Helen Hayes. Mr. Logan calls his offering "A New American Play . . . Based on Anton Chekhov's 'The Cherry Orchard.'"

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Adding Mr. Logan's promotion (he is the director of "South Pacific" and "Mister Roberts" and seems to like to sign his own releases) to his script, we get some notion of the history of the business. It seems that Miss Hayes had some idea she would like to play the Chekhov piece and Mr. Logan had the idea that a transposition of the scene of the original play from pre-revolutionary Russia to the post-Civil War American South was in order. One must admit that the analogy between the two "scenes" would seem superficially to be a fair one, and if honestly followed through, ought to have provided only simple arguments to an ordinarily simple audience. However, what Mr. Logan obviously forgot, in his ministrations to a classic, is that in dealing with Chekhov he was dealing with an artist and therefore he could not only appeal to the commercially simple public. Some historians were bound to be interested, some critics, many readers and all students. What one might call a small but dangerous mixture of *intelligences* was bound to be present whenever his curtain rose.

It was just this segment of his public, nevertheless, that Mr. Logan chose to ignore. By his own account he progressed from a plain transposition of "scene" to a job of rewriting. At every stop in his try-out tour he changed something or other—not in accordance to criticism, but in accordance to box-office response and to Miss Hayes' feeling in her role. The result is a vast vulgarization of a great play in which *nothing matches*. On the one hand, you have the literal translation of whole sections of Chekhov's lines. On the other hand, you have all of his subsidiary characters reduced to a master-gesture each, and all of his major characters completely reversed. And on the third hand, you have these phenomena allied to a happy ending and a number of gags and diversions. One example of the mish-mash will suffice. In the "Cherry Orchard" the character of the heroine's brother is that of an ineffectual, endearing, but pompous man given to delivering speeches on every score. In the "Wisteria Trees" Mr. Logan's version of this figure has no speeches at all, although his effect remains the same. While he wanders in practical silence through Jo Mielziner's marvelously lighted set, he is everywhere lovingly, laughingly greeted with the fact that he talks too much. It will be apparent that the "New American" cue simply does not fit the "Old Russian" lines. "A New American Mystery" is Mr. Logan's correct subtitle and is hereby suggested.

Critical consensus has it that as an excuse for the performance of Miss Hayes the piece has its merits. But here again we are in a maze, since one cannot imagine why Miss Hayes should need an *excuse* rather than a play. She is an actress not a vaudevillian, and I think it's fairly insulting that she should be accused only of a kind of tentative virtuosity when she is so entirely capable of integrity and interpretation. The truth is, she is perhaps the only one of our stars who could have seen the "Orchard" for the "Trees" and I dearly wish she might have seized the chance and given the Chekhov her own especial brand of illumination. And a run. (*at the Martin Beck*) KAPPO PHELAN.

The Screen

Sunshine Cake

IT IS NO EASY thing to explain Bing Crosby's charm, but if you want to see it in action you'll find plenty of it in his newest picture *"Riding High."* This is a remake of an old movie, "Broadway Bill," and is based on a Mark Hellinger story. It has been excellently produced and directed by Frank Capra who found its theme (carefree vagabondia versus stuffy pretentiousness) well suited to his style of film making. Crosby turns on all his appeal as the happy-go-lucky fellow who promises to be a reformed gypsy and give up race horses when he marries the attractive daughter (Frances Gifford) of a powerful tycoon (Charles Bickford) who rules his family with a hand of iron and gold. Our hero really tries to be a big paper-box man but of course industry and the carefree attitude don't get along well; and while waiting for his fiancee to get her divorce from her last husband, our light-hearted boy runs away to prove his horse is a winner.

His fiancee's young sister (Coleen Gray), definitely sympathetic toward this man who cannot be broken by her family, follows; and their adventures at the race tracks with the horse, the groom (Clarence Muse) and various racing characters (including William Demarest, Raymond Walburn, and Percy Kilbride) are well mixed with comedy, sentiment and excitement. The picture gets a little longer than its story merits, but Capra knows how to hold interest with characterization and with extra incidents bubbling with high humor. Perhaps the film glamorizes irresponsibility a little too much, but if its purpose is to give us a lift and make us forget for at least a couple of hours the woes of the world, it is eminently successful. Its songs, cleverly introduced into the script, help keep the spirit of buoyancy; the one about baking a sunshine cake will ring in your head for days. And Frank Capra's cast give their all to keep you amused. But it is mainly der Bingle, whose ease and charm are infectious, who will make you feel like playing hooky.

The English have sent over another of those unpretentious little items that put audiences in a good humor without seeming to make any effort. *"A Run for Your Money"* isn't up to "I Know Where I'm Going" or "Tight Little Island," but it has a sparkle and so much vivid imagination that your interest never lags. Its "Innocents Abroad" story mainly concerns two brothers (Donald Houston and Meredith Edwards), Welsh miners who win a prize of £200 and a trip to London to see a rugby match between Wales and England. The adventures that befall these local yokels are obvious enough, but Producer Michael Balcon and Director Charles Frend have so much fun in portraying their mishaps that you begin to feel in on the trip too. One

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of the brothers falls into the clutches of a girl (Moira Lister) who's out to do him no good, and the other boy is accompanied by an old acquaintance who lugs a harp wandering through the big city. Most fun in this amusing film comes from Alec Guinness who portrays the gardening correspondent of the newspaper giving the prize. This man prefers vegetables to human beings and you almost understand why when you see how exasperated he gets trying to keep track of the two country bumpkins. I doubt if anyone could have done the job better. I couldn't even have pronounced the name of the town from which the boys came: Hafoduwchbenceubwllymarchogcoch. "A Run for Your Money" is well named. You'll even find the Welsh singing very restful.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Of Note

Conditions Inside Spain

THE March 31 issue of *The Standard* (Pearse Street, Dublin) reports on a recent pastoral letter written by Bishop Mondergo Casaus of Barcelona. The Bishop's letter is extremely critical of present social conditions in Spain and of the "excessive bureaucracy" in government service.

> [Bishop Casaus] denounced the "triple evil" of inadequate housing, undernourishment and unemployment. . . .
>
> Recalling "the experience of the past," the Bishop warned that conditions such as those referred to predispose the poor to "any kind of rebellion." He stressed the urgency of the situation: "By lamentations and comments alone we cannot remedy the evil, but only by heroic efforts. The hour for such efforts has struck with such intensity that only those who want to be deaf do not hear it.
>
> "Miserable lodgings which hardly deserve to be called human living quarters are in striking contrast to luxurious and sumptuous buildings only a short distance away. They are certainly not an adequate school of social virtues."
>
> The food that is available, he said, is not being distributed in an equitable manner. "To give a concrete example," he stated, "Large quantities of flour are used for unnecessary luxury goods while there is not enough of it available for the ordinary bread. Is it not a shame that we are not better disciplined and are not willing to accept small sacrifices which would greatly benefit the undernourished? It is obvious that the industries which manufacture those luxury products would suffer some loss, but there are ways and means of attenuating this effect. . . . It is more important that all are able to eat sufficiently than that a number of privileged people are enabled to enjoy what not only is not necessary, but may at times even be prejudicial to their health."
>
> As to the present unemployment, the Bishop of Barcelona blamed "those who accumulated money and keep it idle instead of investing in in production," thus providing labor with a chance to earn a decent living. Increased production and lower prices are necessary for the common good, the Bishop declared.
>
> The Bishop also denounced those who are lazy in their work, especially in the service of the Government: "If there is a lack of industriousness, for instance, in the offices of public or private institutions, it makes it necessary to employ a larger number of persons and this excessive bureaucracy keeps many people in office who should rather be engaged in productive work."

Our Decade

A DECADE IN RETROSPECT" is the general title of a series of articles being published in the English Jesuit publication *The Month* (114 Mount Street, W.1. London). The series is an attempt by a variety of writers, journalists, philosophers and political commentators to present a balanced, over-all evaluation of the momentous years 1940-1949. The third in the series, presented in April, is written by F. A. Voigt.

> Whether the Ten Years have made me better or worse, I do not know, but they have made me see, or think I see, the present age in a certain manner. Do I see what I believe or believe what I see? Others will, perhaps, say that what I believe is heresy or secular error and that what I see is a false image or a phantom. However that may be, what I do see—"subjectively" or "objectively" (or both)—is the preponderance of evil and the ascendancy of Antichrist.
>
> The ultimate character of every age is determined not by its art or science, not by its philosophy, not by its social or political order, not by its "civilization." All these, and the character of the age itself, are determined by its religion. Beliefs are decisive. Beliefs made the Ten Years what they were. Catastrophic beliefs engendered catastrophe.
>
> What are those beliefs in the present, the eleventh year, 1950?
>
> These are the articles of the contemporary creed:
>
> Religion without God; Christianity without Christ; Christ without Antichrist; Heaven without Hell; works without faith; a God of Love but not of Wrath; a Church that can bless but cannot curse.
>
> We believe that God, almighty and incarnate, is but a benevolent Spirit; that Satan does not exist; that Christ was the author of an ethical code, but not the Godhead crucified. We profess to be-

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lieve that He existed, for agnosticism is no longer the fashion.

We believe that the Gospels must conform with our time and not our time with the Gospels.

We believe that man is by nature good and can, by his own efforts, attain perfection, although what "perfection" is we do not know and hardly even care. We believe—if "believe" is not too strong a word for fashionable opinions—that there can be crime without sin and no sin without crime.

We believe in order without hierarchy, in progress without direction, in freedom as an end and not a means, in justice as a means and not an end. We believe that justice can be qualified, that there is political justice, social justice, economic justice, or historical justice, or any justice other than justice.

All articles of our creed can be summed up in one phrase: "the Christian ethic."

The "Christian ethic" is the Antichrist of the Western world. It is the most insidious and formidable corruption that ever afflicted that world.

Verbal Unrealities

AN EDITORIAL note in the April issue of *The Sower,* (Lower Gornal, Dudley, England), a quarterly journal of Catholic education, says this:

> We can be grateful to the BBC Third Program and the Dominican fathers for staging several medieval disputations, in full syllogistic form, and so effectually dissipating any lingering idea some romantic souls may have cherished that such a discipline might still be helpful in getting at the truth. The radio disputations confirmed the impression gathered in one's student days, that it would be hard to invent a method at once more time-wasting, and more bulls-eye-missing. The real discussion does not begin until the objector gets to his informal objections; so long as the syllogistic form is kept the discussion usually amounts to little more than assertion and counter-assertion, like the reiterated "Yes, it does," "No, it doesn't," of two small boys. The valuable features of the medieval method, namely the definition of terms and the distinguishing of ambiguous terms, are in no way dependent on syllogistic form. Dr. Joad's formula "It depends what you mean by——" is just as good a way of making distinctions for practical purposes. The main result of keeping to strict syllogistic form is to eliminate, not merely emotion, but also the rich complexity of life and experience from any discussion, so that the disputants never really get to grips. One wonders how far the training of the clergy in this respect may be responsible for our frequent inability to make contact with the minds of our own age. Even in the Middle Ages, the medieval style of disputation surely did not in the long run lead to truth; it led to Wittenberg and Geneva.

William-the-Whim

Joe Dever

THE Saroyan power and charm—what is it? It has all been said before, but the power and charm still has to do with simple, indefatigable singing about simple people; a singing disarmingly frank, naive; a whimsy vivid, pungent, masterfully contrived. It is a simple, affectionate singing about simple humanity which can get tiresome and constitute a basis of disparaging criticism.

Yet, in fairness to Saroyan, there is a consistent note in the work of almost every writer which will bear a certain disparagement. There is the sophisticated weariness of Eliot, the gusty muscle-flexing of Hemingway, the grimness of Greene, the detachment of Waugh, the ferocity of Lowell, the streaks of Jansenism in Merton. Put your eye to a flaw, keep it there, and you will have a basis for criticism.

One gets the healthy suspicion that Saroyan is disliked in a personal way by many writers and critics. People in the business seem, at times, to resent his colossal ego, which they find hard to disassociate from his art. Whimsical Willie, they think, has made world literary capital out of an inexhaustible, dedicated naiveté. One gets the further healthy suspicion that most writers are reluctant to admit they are professionally jealous, to an extent, of other writers who are a popular and even critical success. Maybe this is true of writing and editorial people who do not like Saroyan. But that is not to say they don't have a basis for a critical dislike of the poet-laureate of Fresno. His invariable air of innocence, simplicity, candor is not without a sophistication that betrays a certain guile.

Personally, this reviewer does not mind that guile, the "pernicious Armenia," and is fetched by Saroyan at his best, mostly in small doses. He is glad, for example, that the early shorter pieces like "The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse" and the "Presbyterian Choir Boys" will be gracing short fiction anthologies for many a year to come. And it is a kind of tribute that a performance of "The Mad Woman of Chaillot" will call forth Saroyan's name and dramatic work when the show is over and the waiter is taking the orders. It may be a wild surmise to suggest that Giradoux has given time to the plays of Saroyan. If it is true, however, one feels safe in saying that Saroyan, from the philosophical aspect, would do well to give some time to Giradoux.

A reading of the Saroyan wartime diary which makes up the first half of his latest book (*The Twin Adventure.* Harcourt. $3.00) confirms the suspicion that the author must be hard to take socially.

JOE DEVER *is a novelist and short-story writer who lives in Chicago.*

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Noel Coward, for example, waves at him wildly from a London theater box ("where everybody can see him," says Saroyan) and the human comedian pays no attention. He insults, somewhat facetiously, J. Arthur Rank at a cocktail party and merely exchanges greetings with Ernest Hemingway at Cyril Connolly's. He is unimpressed by celebrities and people of financial, political and military eminence. Many of the latter, he senses, are superficial people, leading superficial lives.

On the other hand, he will swipe cheese sandwiches from the Red Cross canteen and distribute them to London street urchins; he will read and comment sympathetically upon long, painful, unpublished manuscripts offered to him by obscure GI's; he will do many of the naive, yet irresistably charming things which his characters do—the kind things, the bizarre things, the fearlessly honest actions and words.

In *The Adventures of Wesley Jackson,* Saroyan's republished war novel, which forms the second half of *The Twin Adventure,* Pvt. Jackson is the little man of the war who strives to live his own simple, honest life and meets the immovable force of the powercrats on almost every level of experience. The novel was first published in '46 and was received, one seems to recall, as mediocre Saroyan. That is very probably the right judgment on the book because surely most of the critics had "heard that song before," only this time, the sheet music was olive drab.

Yet it can honestly be contended that thousands, if not millions, of ex-GI's who read rather than analyze, would enjoy "Wesley Jackson" because they have known his hatred for officer aristos, his escapist love for easy women, his idealism for *the* woman, his detestation of war, his camaraderie with *les GI misérables,* his concealed cowardice in combat, his fever for New York, Chicago, San Francisco.

This double feature was written collaterally in one month—repeat—thirty days—at the Savoy Hotel, London, near the end of the European war. And since the novel was published previously, the present format seems like a volume chiefly of interest to writers, critics and Saroyanites.

Saroyan's life as an army private, before and during his wartime tour of "duty" in London, has gone into both the diary and the novel. Comparisons between the diary entries and the same items dramatized in the novel are both disarming and alarming.

The diary: During cocktails somebody introduced me to Rank. I said very lightly, "A gathering of moving picture interests like this is a good thing. Arrangements can be made for everybody to steal from the public more effectively." The man looked at me as if I were mad and edged away without a word.

The novel, Wesley Jackson speaking: Well, the writer and I went along, and he told me the man was one of the biggest men in the moving picture business in England, and it was no little thing for him to ask me to lunch, but I said, "I don't like him."

"Why not?" the writer said.

"I think he's a crook."

"He is," the writer said. "But you're going to learn that a lot of the important people in the world are crooks. . . ."

★

WHAT does Saroyan say in these complementary books? Over and above his fierce indictment of the stupidity and inhumanity of war, he says what he's always been saying: love, simplicity and honesty, make royalty of human beings. It is, in a way, too bad that many of the characters in *The Man on the Flying Trapeze, My Name Is Aram, The Human Comedy*—not to mention the plays—have been saying these things, saying them in a Johnny-one-note way, the way Wesley Jackson talks about love:

> I knew how in love he was, and I knew what love could do to a man. Love could make any man great. Nothing else could do it, but love could do it. I knew it was not good not being in love.

It is a fascinating experience to come at Saroyan after a five-year separation from his work and to feel the old elation his first books aroused in one. Maybe its analogous to those glittery people in Hollywood who keep wanting to give it another try because time has dulled the pain and she looks "gorgeroo" above the chaliced shrimp at Ciro's. But will she look that way in the morning when there is no alka seltzer in the house and she suddenly remembers he was always a few days late with the alimony, "and so on and so forth," as Saroyan himself would say.

Anyway, he told the Brass off, with his own lips and the lips of Pvt. Wesley Jackson. That will keep many ex-KP's faithful to him though hell and the higher criticism should bar the way.

Books

Out of the Earth. Louis Bromfield. Harper. $4.00.

LOOK elsewhere if the first warm days of April have brought back a desire for a volume that tries to conjure up the joys of living in the country—or even for one that seeks to prove that for independence and security there is nothing equal to earning a living on the land. To be sure, *Out of the Earth* has its handsome half-tones of herds and ponds and fields heavy with grasses; also beguiling photos of the sturdy author, with faithful bulldog, and various technicians and helpers on his Malabar Farm, happy as bees about whatever they are doing. And then in a final three-page apostrophe there are eloquent references to the truly successful farmer: "He keeps city hours, but during the day his

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work is half fun, because the drudgery has gone out of it. He is out of doors with the smell of fresh-turned earth rising to him from the furrow, the sight of a darting cock pheasant rising before his eyes in a kind of brilliant hymn to the morning."

But *Out of the Earth* is simply a book about better methods of farming for those who till the soil as a life work. It is a challenging book about the "New Agriculture," by which Mr. Bromfield does not mean the dominant trend toward large-scale mechanization and factories-in-the-fields so characteristic of America today. What he has in mind is the utilization of the latest knowledge about soils, feed, plant strains, human nutrition, flood control and many other related things. Mr. Bromfield appears always ready with an opinion but it is usually qualified or well-documented—often from the wealth of his own decade of experience farming his acres of supposedly worn-out Ohio land. And he does make it plain that good farming is a rather complicated business.

His book, in fact, presents a good summary of the present state of the reaction against the ruinous sort of corn or cotton agriculture which culminated in our dust bowls and our displaced Okies and Arkies. It deals with organic and chemical fertilizers and the proper role of each; the kind of plowing that leaves the soil rich in organic matter, earthworms and minerals; the key role of boron and other "trace elements"; the extent to which healthy growing conditions make insecticides unnecessary; using chicken litter and other animal manure for feeding, and why the henhouse and barn should not be scoured with disinfectant. It tells how the ponds and streams and little dams of the Muskingum, Ohio, Conservancy District have built up beauty and wild life for miles around; how tree culture, cover crops and right care of the soil, together with the Muskingum (or TVA) type of control of "little waters" embody the only genuine method of preventing the ravage of periodic floods.

MR. BROMFIELD attacks the prevailing corn-hog system and demonstrates how the livestock supported by a farm can be increased tenfold by supplanting corn by certain soil-building grasses. About the only major subject that occurs to a non-farmer which the author does not treat is that of our mounting food surpluses. For one thing he is more interested in the productive end, convinced as he is that American farmers suffer because they produce but from one-quarter to one-third of what they could by right methods. Moreover, he refers disparagingly to crop supports. One reason is that the kind of farming Mr. Bromfield preaches—and practices—is largely self-subsistent. Another is that with the dominance of one-crop farming and ever wider mechanization on the grand scale—which results in diminishing returns per acre, widespread erosion and an underground water table which gets progressively and dangerously lower by the year—conservation and rebuilding are the immediate needs. To put over a program of such scope and importance, counter to the dominant commercial farming trend in the United States, is enough to ask of any man. EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

A Golden Girl. Harry Sylvester. Harcourt. $3.00.

HARRY SYLVESTER is a novelist who attempts difficult and significant themes. Or perhaps we should say variations on the same theme, namely, the abject failure of so many Catholics to live up to their Faith. He is deeply conscious of the human element in the Church: the intriguing ecclesiastics, the servile laity, the general lack of civic conscience, the Jansenism, the negativism, the pharisaism, the falsification of charity.

In *Dearly Beloved* he wrote of our inadequacies in dealing with colored people. In *Dayspring* he contrasted the primitive purity of Mexican "penitentes" with the febrile decadence of visiting scholars and pleasure-seekers. (In that book also, by way of pleasant exception, he showed something of the divine side of the Church and of the workings of grace.) In *Moon Gaffney* he excoriated the "Tammany" side of American Catholicism.

NOW, in *A Golden Girl,* Sylvester continues in the same genre. The story is simple. An American woman on the loose comes to Lima and sets four men on edge. These men are a Spanish bullfighter and three Americans—an attaché at the American Embassy, a salesman, and a mine-owner.

Of the main characters, three are, or were, Catholic: the woman, the bullfighter and the salesman.

The bullfighter displays a proverbially Latin disregard for the sixth commandment, and is apparently unaware of "the burden of belief."

The salesman still practices his Faith, but he is mentally and physically ill. Aware that his negative formation and his negative virginity have left him immature, he becomes impotently and verbally obsessed by desire. He has never known "a Catholic who was really an adult or even substantially a success in the world who did not ignore or distort his Church's teachings."

As for the woman, the damaged product of divorced parents, what finished her as a Catholic "was the constant current of negation that ran through the lives of every Catholic I knew: my mother, who I discovered would not sleep with my father; the girls I grew up with in Montclair, believing the Blessed Virgin wept if they whistled or smoked; the poor ninnies of nuns who taught them so. . . . With my mind I wanted to believe but my guts wouldn't let me. Of course, their principal denial centered in sex, and I suppose it didn't take much to have my rejection of what they stood for. . . ." Fortunately she adds, "It's not only a Catholic failing—so many Americans have it."

THESE unattractive people meander from one liaison or misunderstanding to another. All is bitterness, futility, and promiscuity. The characters are petulant and formless. Without aim or awareness of objective values and realities, they incessantly contemplate their own navels, or, more accurately, their genitals. They live in a subjective miasma, always keeping a finger on the pulse of their own feelings.

And what is the purpose of all this? Presumably it is to be found in the passage from Pascal quoted on the

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title page: "It is natural for the mind to believe, and for the will to love; so that, for want of true objects, they must attach themselves to false." The theme is noble, but the development falters.

The Catholics in *A Golden Girl* are incredibly misinformed. I do not believe, for example, that any Catholic not certifiably insane would be capable of stating—as do two characters in this book—that the fish has been chosen as a symbol of Christ because fish don't copulate; or that enforced continence could become so difficult for another character that "the uncharity he committed because of it was greater than the sin of adultery" so he was justified in visiting a brothel.

Moreover the teaching of the Church that the sexual drive is fundamentally God-given and good is nowhere even suggested. It is out of the contrast between what should have been and what was that a real tragedy might have been written. Catholicism neither denies nor thwarts our sexual appetite, but brings it to true expression by ordering it to its proper ends and by preventing its purposeless squandering. Not only are all the characters totally unaware of these things, but the reader is left similarly uninformed.

Harry Sylvester is a writer of courage and integrity. The intensity of his drive to expose hypocrisy and ignorance among Catholics must spring from a longing that Catholicism should be shown before all men to be what in truth it is. But I wish that this motivation were more conscious and more apparent. MURRAY BALLANTYNE.

My Philosophy. Benedetto Croce. Macmillan. $3.50.

THE first half of our century has not seen another philosopher who has equaled the versatility shown in the work of Benedetto Croce. Beginning, at the turn of the century, with antiquarian studies of Renaissance Naples, his interests have drawn him into such divergent fields as aesthetics, linguistics, logic, political science, and, in the last decades, the relationship of philosophy and history. In Italy, in at least one field, that of literary criticism, he is acknowledged as the master of his generation, and his critical works have become indispensable for a knowledge of Italian cultural life in the first part of the century. Abroad, the varying extent of his influence can be indicated by such followers and critics as Georges Sorel, H. L. Mencken, R. G. Collingwood, and Roscoe Pound.

His theoretical works have not been without their practical counterpart. Before the advent of Fascism he was for a short while Minister of Education, and some twenty-five years later, after the military defeat of Fascism, he helped to organize and direct a South Italy Republic which worked with the Allied forces. His was the only authoritative voice of opposition tolerated by the Fascists, a toleration which was based on the obvious apathetic indifference of his countrymen to their Liberal spokesman.

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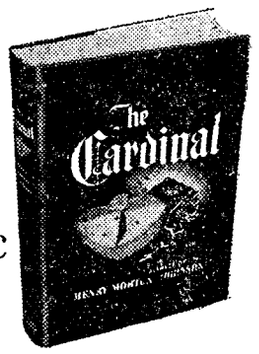

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ism and the political party inspired by it in present-day Italy, Croce's stand has been at times paradoxically close to that of the Christian Democrats. As the essays in this collection reveal, he has, like the Christian Democrats, consistently fought the idea of the omnipotent state, euphemistically termed the "moral State" by the Fascist philosopher, Gentile. Like them, he has consistently urged cautious and conservative measures to correct present social injustices. So conservative has he been, however, that the Liberal Party, which is the embodiment of his political thought, has failed utterly because of its ultra-conservative, reactionary character.

As an indication of how close Croce came to the Catholic position is the essay entitled "Why We Cannot Help Calling Ourselves Christians." At the time the essay appeared there was open talk of an imminent conversion of Croce. That hope was unfounded. Croce's essay was only a plea for a greater humanism, an appeal, as he would say, to the spirit of man. It implied no recognition of transcendence nor (a key point) any revaluation on his part of the problem of personality. To the last Croce remains faithful to his philosophy of pure immanence.

Croce is not a pure philosopher. In these essays, written over the last five years or so, he discusses problems of art, politics and morality, and since the translation is superb there could be no better way for the American reader to become acquainted with a thinker who is in many ways a more mellow and skeptical Erasmus. These essays will explain why he more than any other can be considered the finest representative of Italian Liberalism and a worthy opponent of men such as Don Sturzo.

To most readers the most interesting selections will be the essays on Communism, especially those on "The Idea of Classes As Real Entities" and "An Essay on Communist Philosophy." And for those who delight in literary iconoclasm there is an essay called "Proust: An Example of Decadent Historical Method." Such bluntness is refreshing. SERGE HUGHES.

The Price of Union. Herbert Agar. Houghton Mifflin. $5.00.

THOSE who think they can read any book in one evening will find themselves unable to finish this one in that fashion. Herbert Agar seems to be well disposed toward a powerful central government. He believes that the powers assumed constitutionally or otherwise by the central government in times of stress are abandoned once the peril is over. That is certainly not altogether true; otherwise our central government would be no stronger than it was in Washington's administration. He approves the compromises frequently reached by the state and federal governments; he believes that the unwritten sections of the Constitution are as important as those that have been reduced to writing.

His book contains many biographical sketches of varying lengths. Some may feel that he has oversimplified

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the causes of the American Revolution, but practically every well-informed person will agree with his analysis of Washington. Agar approves of Webster who was willing to compromise and thereby avert war in 1850. Strangely enough, the author also greatly admires Lincoln who was not ready to compromise on a section of the Republican party platform (opposition to the geographical expansion of slavery) of 1860 and thereby brought on the Civil War. He is quite critical of Thaddeus Stevens and also of Andrew Johnson. The book concludes with the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, a firm advocate of centralization, who is also greatly admired by the author. All in all, centralization fares very well in this book. PAUL KINIERY.

100 *Modern Poems. Edited by Selden Rodman. Pellegrini & Cudahy.* $2.75.

MR. RODMAN, who has already committed four anthologies, now comes forward with what looks like a brilliant idea for a fifth. Modern poetry in the English language owes so much to the poetry of other languages and to contemporary experiments in English prose, that no truly satisfactory anthology of modern poems should overlook (for example) Rimbaud, Rilke, Blok, Mayakovsky, Apollinaire, Lorca; or the experiments in prose of such figures as Stein, Hemingway, and Joyce. Furthermore, any such anthology should have a special section devoted to satire, so much modern poetry having been written in this genre. These are splendid innovations, particularly in a collection directed at the middle-brow reader, who knows no language but his own, and is therefore unacquainted with the almost century-old origins of "modern" poetry. Mr. Rodman's introduction, too, will be extremely helpful to such a reader.

However, when we discover that no fewer than eight of the twenty-five translations are the work of Mr. Rodman, it behooves us to examine his credentials as a translator. Let us just look at the first translation whose original comes to hand, "Zone," by Guillaume Apollinaire. Ouch! Mr. Rodman is entitled to his share of poetic license, because he is attempting—quite successfully—to reproduce the movement and rhyme-scheme of the original. Unfortunately, he misunderstands both the letter and the spirit of Apollinaire's poem.

Naturally enough, his dictionary prevents him from making literal errors on the unusual words, because he looks them up; it's the words he thinks he knows that confound him. His one real schoolboy error is to mix up *vécu* (lived) with *vaincu* (conquered). But what are we to say when he translates *juge d'instruction* (examining magistrate) as "professor," thus making nonsense of the reference to a criminal in the next line? Sometimes one needs only a knowledge of English to tell that Mr. Rodman is in error. Take this obscure phrase:

far off on the horizon
Below invisible but audible the eagle's cry

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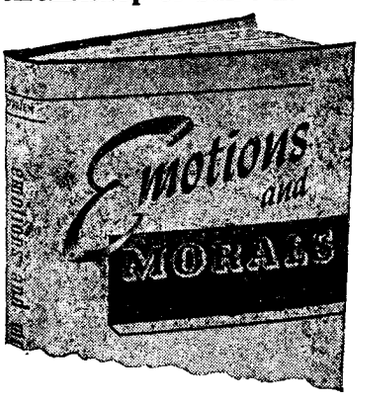

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A literal translation of the French gives, "The eagle swoops from the horizon uttering a loud cry." Mr. Rodman appears to have mixed up *fond,* the verb with *fond,* the noun.

This — and many other — literal errors, as well as instances of misplaced emphasis leave me wondering whether Mr. Rodman and I are reading the same poem, and whether he is competent to judge its "outstanding literary merit and significance" (see the book's dust jacket), let alone to translate it.

Such distortions as Mr. Rodman is here shown to be guilty of will appear unimportant only to those who regard literature as unimportant; Mr. Rodman is not of their number, for he is a literary man by profession. He and others like him have only themselves to blame if their profession falls into disrepute through their failure to measure up to the minimum standard of competence we take for granted in, say, an architect.

VIVIAN MERCIER.

Laurel. Alice Fellows. Harcourt. $3.00.

THIS reviewer feels a certain pride in his fortitude in making his way through this novel to the very end. It is not that it is a bad novel, it has some remarkable virtues, but as a whole its interior monologue becomes a highly intellectualized monotone.

The heroine describes her state of mind from childhood through the year—somewhere in her early twenties —when her obsessive concern with family pride is broken by the circumstances around the disposition of Laurel, the family homestead.

Miss Fellows has recorded the mind of a sensitive girl warped by her mother's irrational pride. The author has not been successful in rendering an understandable person. She writes only of the girl's bitterness—there is no relief, little comprehension. The other characters suffer the same lack of tone, being respectively stony, disillusioned and drunken, clumsy but likable, bitter, etc. Miss Fellows is a good writer and a thoughtful person, but her first novel does not deal with *people* so much as symbols of sharply-felt emotions and attitudes, who obediently perform the required actions.

W. P.

• REVIEWERS •

MURRAY BALLANTYNE until recently was editor of *The Ensign.* He has been active in the Catholic social movement in Quebec.

SERGE HUGHES teaches at St. John's University in Brooklyn.

PAUL KINIERY is dean of the graduate school of Loyola University, Chicago.

VIVIAN MERCIER teaches at Columbia and at the City College of New York. He is presently working on an anthology of the Celtic revival.

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